5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
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Marriage and Relationship

578 In the social life of the people polygamy is generally
595 practised, some men having as many as eight wives. While a good deal may be said in justification of this practice among a nomadic people, such as these aborigines are, it is a very fruitful cause of trouble and strife. This is occasioned by the jealousy which older wives frequently feel toward their younger tribal
[589] sisters, and also by the fact that, because of this system, many young men of marriageable age are unable to obtain partners. This latter fact, not unnaturally, leads to the stealing of women and general breaches of the moral laws of the tribe.

562 One, to us, highly unjust custom is to punish a woman who
627 has been stolen, even though she has been taken away by force,
672 much more severely than the man who has stolen her. In most
684 cases she is, when recovered, badly speared or beaten, in some cases so severely treated as to be killed, while the man who has taken her, unless he occupy a prohibited relationship to the woman, is usually let off with a severe lecturing.

627 Generally all the relatives of the wronged husband who are
684 present will join in this brutal chastisement of the woman, their action being justified by the fact that they "feel sorry" for their fellow-tribesman. Perhaps experience has proved the value of this method of controlling domestic relationships.

582 Marriage, as previously indicated, is regulated by the social
584 organisation of the tribe. There are only certain men of the opposite moiety who are eligible to become the husband of any particular girl or woman. To one of these men the girl is given in infancy, and, though this man has nothing directly to do with her until she reaches the age of puberty, he is required, during the years of her infancy and girlhood, to fulfil certain obligations, such as the making of presents of food, weapons or utensils, to her father.

[585] Because of this custom, there is nothing approaching a ceremony of marriage among these people, the girl during infancy as really belonging to the man as she will later on when he actually
587 takes her to wife. When a man dies, his wife or wives immediately
768 pass over to one or more of his tribal brothers, so that, excepting in the case of a few very old women, there are no widows, and there are no orphans in this aboriginal community.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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wives from the same woman, though his brothers remain in bachelor solitude. 583

Dangatji, who had a small daughter, went to the youthful Geitpapoi and made a proposal: 'I have a daughter who some day will marry; she cannot marry you, because she is your tribal mother-in-law, but her daughter will be in the right relationship for marriage. If you want my unborn granddaughter, let us come to an understanding. If you start making payments through my daughter I will see that eventually you get her daughter.' Geitpapoi closed on the deal immediately, and performed the rite of Inipi on his infant mother-in-law, through whom he cheerfully made frequent payments to Dangatji of spears, stone axes, dilly-bags, and food. In time the mother-in-law grew up, Dangatji settled her marriage, and she was taken off to her husband's territory where her first child, a son, was born. Geitpapoi kept up his payments, though no longer to Dangatji, but to the mother-in-law's husband, in the hope that eventually she would produce him a wife. When a daughter was born, the mother sent a message to Geitpapoi: 'Son-in-law, your wife has now arrived; I will mind her for you until she grows up, but I need more food, and further presents.' All these were forthcoming from a gratified Geitpapoi, who brought the best of his food to his mother-in-law and made frequent presents to his tribal father-in-law.

Having served for over twenty years for a wife, Geitpapoi came to claim her, and his mother-in-law prepared the bridal camp. Three fires were lit on the beach, and that night Geitpapoi and his bride slept between two of them whilst the mother-in-law slept on the outside. A mother-in-law stays with the young wife, who is said to be timid and afraid of her husband; she will not so much as speak to him but confines her remarks to her mother, in her husband's hearing. Such timidity is often genuine, and continues for 585

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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585 a week or ten days, till the husband takes her away to the bush, where they set up camp by themselves.

583 All negotiations for wives do not run smoothly, for if a prospective husband's horde quarrels with the horde of the father-in-law, the Inipi agreement will probably lapse, or if one tribal son-in-law offers better payment than another, the result is not hard to foresee. Our house-boy, Naradjin, wanted to buy a wife, but the father of the girl, though considering his suit and receiving gifts from him, was also negotiating with Baradjuna, who, despite being sixty years old and having eleven wives, had performed the Inipi rite and expected the girl to come to him. Both men stood in the correct tribal relationship to the girl, and the problem deteriorated into a question of who had the greater influence. At one stage, Baradjuna took the girl and cleared out, and the argument would probably have ended there had not the girl run back to her father. Tribal hostilities in a distant but related horde caused the breaking off of diplomatic relations with Baradjuna, and the balance finally swung in favour of Naradjin when the girl's father, in a moment of wrathful indignation, bestowed his daughter upon him.

589 An aboriginal marries all the widows, childless or otherwise, of his deceased blood or tribal brother. Every woman usually stands in the relationship of wife to a number of men who are tribal brothers. She marries one of them and, if he dies, she and her children automatically enter the camp of another brother who has always been her tribal husband as well as a tribal father to her children. For this reason a man does not know the number of wives and half-grown children he is likely to acquire through the deaths of brothers, and irrespective of his personal views, desires or efforts toward obtaining a family, he has little say in the matter. Fortunately Stone Age women are not burdensome, for they are food-gatherers, and children are their responsibility.

583 Natural affinity between youths and the young wives of